Progressive Calvinism

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VOLUME I SEPTEMBER, 1955 NUMBER 9

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We Are In Favor of Justice for the Laboring Man

We make no secret that we are hostile to some labor unions as they operate in America. We have reasons for our opposition to certain labor unions.

1. They openly subscribe to the principle of *coercion,* which violates the commandments of God; see July, 1955, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM; and

2. Even when they *in principle* do not subscribe to *coercion,* it is the *common practice* of many unions to engage in threats, violence and coercion. Honest men know that. Such unionism is the worst prevalent evil in American society.

Our readers may make an incorrect inference from the foregoing statement against which we wish to guard. The incorrect inference is that we are unfriendly toward the wage and salary

Published each month by the Progressive Calvinism League. Founders of the League: Frederick Nymeyer, John Van Mouwerik and Martin B. Nymeyer. Subscription price: $2.00 per year (for students $1.00 per year); single copies, 50 cents. Address all subscriptions and communications to Progressive Calvinism League, 366 East 166th Street, South Holland, Illinois, U. S. A.

earner and unsympathetic to their problems. Some readers may infer that we are "capitalists" and exploiters and uncharitable.

We are not saints, but we have no toleration toward the grinding down of the weak, the poor, the unfortunate, the very young and the very old. We are mindful of the many curses in Scripture on those who exploit the poor, the widows, the orphans and the distressed. We believe Scripture and fear its warnings.

Karl Marx declared that capitalism (the system of private property approved by Scripture) "exploited" the workers. Therefore, he declared that property, especially such property as is used for production (land, factories, etc.), should all be collectively owned; and consequently no interest or dividends should be paid, that is, there should be no "return" on capital to a capitalist. All income received by the capitalist (the owner of the means of production) was "exploitation" of the laborer! The man who owned capital took a slice of what the laborer produced. (We cannot here consider the reasoning by which Marx reached that conclusion.)

Originally the church disputed Marx's idea. That idea was revolutionary compared to the old teachings of the church. But gradually Marx has prevailed. Today many theologians agree that capitalism unjustly takes something away from the worker. In other words, the worker does not get all that he should get.

Some theologians say that capital should get *nothing*. Then the conclusion *seems* to follow that if the capitalist gets anything, he must be doing so by robbery, by fraud, by force or by exploitation of the laborer. If so, it would clearly be *sin*.

More conservative theologians will say that capital should not get "too much" of what is produced; further, that capital formerly got "too much," and that in the past the worker was generally exploited; finally, that capital should get less than formerly and that there should be a "just" distribution between capital and labor. This second attitude is the prevailing one in the Christian Reformed church.

The Calvin Forum is the magazine of the faculty of Calvin College and Seminary. The editor is Dr. Cecil De Boer. *The Calvin Forum* has frequently passed moral judgments on various

political, economic and social problems. PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM addresses the following questions to Editor De Boer. These questions are easy, but they pertain to the *most controversial moral question* of the age — the return to labor and the return to capital. What is the answer of *The Calvin Forum* to the following:

1. Is capital entitled to any return?
2. Should that be a *just* return?
3. How determine what is a *just* return?
4. Does the return on capital exist because capital is productive? If so, is capital entitled to the *whole* return on its productivity?
5. Is capital entitled to part of what labor produces or is the laborer entitled to *all* that he produces?

A Cause for Continued Amazement

Thirty-five or so years ago we subscribed to *The Princeton Theological Review,* and continued to read it until it discontinued publication. Its successor is *The Evangelical Quarterly,* 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1. *The Evangelical Quarterly* describes itself as a "theological review, international in scope and outlook, in defence of the historic Christian faith." We have read *The Evangelical Quarterly* from its first issue with pleasure and profit, and recommend it to our readers. The well-known Professor F. F. Bruce, M. A., of Sheffield is the editor.

We were interested to read in the July, 1955, issue of *The Evangelical Quarterly* the following reference to PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. (The first two sentences are quoted from the January, 1955, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.)

"The churches will be ineffective in mission work unless they are willing to declare boldly and loudly that

> prosperity follows the Christian religion as his shadow follows a man. Why should anyone adopt the Christian religion if it does not pay to do so?" "Reactionary!" the reader exclaims. But no; it is progressive — at least, it is the view of the newly organized "Progressive Calvinism League." The organizers are not scared of criticism; they quote a recent number of *Calvin College Chimes* to the effect that "the League seems to have no want of religious enthusiasm, it has ample audacity and no little presumption, it has a most ambitious programme and is assumed to be well financed; it lacks only discerning thought, an understanding of Calvinism, and a real message for the Christian Reformed citizens of Hadleyburg." Obviously a controversial enterprise. Readers who wish to know more about the League, or to see its monthly organ, PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, should communicate with it at 366 East 166th Street, South Holland, Illinois, U.S.A.

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, as the editor of *The Evangelical Quarterly* notes, is not sensitive to a college student magazine (edited under the close supervision of the faculty) declaring that the founders of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM (1) "lack discerning thought, (2) an understanding of Calvinism, and (3) a real message for the Christian Reformed citizens of Hadleyburg." We have long been aware that our "thought" is not too discerning; we genuinely regret it and also that the public has discovered it. And we do not have an "understanding" of Calvinism either, if by Calvinism is meant what is taught in certain schools. And in regard to the "citizens of Hadleyburg" we may some day return to that.

But our real interest in the notice in *The Evangelical Quarterly* is the reference to our Declaration Five which reads:

> (a) Promote confidence that prosperity obtained in a free market society is the result of obedience to the law of God; and (b) discontinue all apologies for that prosperity and all policies which will undermine that prosperity.

In the accompanying text in our first issue we wrote what Professor Bruce quotes:

> The churches will be ineffective in mission work unless they are willing to declare boldly and loudly that prosperity follows the Christian religion as his shadow follows a man. Why should anyone adopt the Christian religion if it does not pay to do so?

Professor Bruce is apparently typical in his reaction to our six Declarations. The Declarations do not seem especially doubtful, except Declaration Five, just quoted. And that surprises us. We thought our idea was scriptural. For family devotions we recently read Deuteronomy 7 and 8. Here are some relevant passages on reward for obeying God and punishment for disobeying God:

> *Deuteronomy 7:9-16.* Know therefore that Jehovah thy God, he is God, the faithful God, who keepeth covenant and lovingkindness with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations, and repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. Thou shalt therefore keep the commandment, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which I command thee this day, to do them.
>
> And it shall come to pass, because ye hearken to these ordinances, and keep and do them, that Jehovah thy God will keep with thee the covenant and the lovingkindness which he sware unto thy fathers: and he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee; he will also bless the fruit of thy body and the fruit of thy ground, thy grain and thy new wine and thine oil, the increase of thy cattle and the young of thy flock, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee.
>
> *Deuteronomy 8:19,20.* And it shall be, if thou shalt forget Jehovah thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations that Jehovah maketh to perish before you, so shall ye perish; because ye would not hearken unto the voice of Jehovah your God.

We ask: Did Moses or did Moses not associate prosperity with adherence to the Hebrew religion? We believe our Declaration Five agrees with what Moses taught.

One hundred and eleven years ago a son was born in a German manse, son of a minister and grandson of two ministers. The boy is known to history as Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900), hater of the Christian religion, founder of the idea of the superman, and prophet of German imperialism and aggression. We are, of course, as unsympathetic to the final thought of Nietzsche as anyone could be. But the case of Nietzsche interests us. How could he turn out as he did, reared as he was in devout evangelical circumstances? Our answer to that is that Christianity became associated in Nietzsche's mind with helplessness, and nonsuccess, and passivity toward any kind of power. A religion which taught defeatism in this life, and taught escapism through the life-to-come, possibly became a terrifying thing in his mind. To him Christianity may have been synonymous with failure, which indeed is what many Christians teach. His reaction was extreme, namely, a rejection of the *whole* of Christianity. What he should have rejected was only a Christianity which associated itself (incorrectly) with continual defeat and failure in this life. We do not "explain" Nietzsche by saying he was an agent of the devil, although the inevitable result of Nietzsche's philosophy has been and always will be catastrophic to the world. We believe a mistaken attitude among Christians associating Christianity with misery, failure and disgrace was *one* cause for Nietzsche's attitude. Instead of attacking Christianity generally as Nietzsche did, we are disposed to declare what we believe Scripture declares, as was quoted from Deuteronomy 7 and 8, namely, Christianity is not fundamentally a religion of failure in this life.

The promises of reward and the threats of punishment in Deuteronomy 7 and 8 are not ordinarily, in our thinking, *direct* acts of God. We consider that there is an obvious law of cause and effect operative in Moses' scheme of things. Moses taught "freedom" and "noncoercion" except that certain evils should be forcefully resisted (see the Decalogue). "Freedom" as defined by Moses meant the operation of what is known today among social scientists as a "free market economy." (We hope to show

that relationship more fully later.) It is because a supernatural factor is erroneously considered by many Christians to be the *only* factor which is operating to cause prosperity to follow on obedience to God, that there is no real confidence in the earthly rewards of the Christian religion by ordinary cause and effect. Men should have confidence in what Moses wrote for *two* reasons, namely, (1) the operation of ordinary cause and effect will make prosperity follow active obedience to the Christian religion (except there be interference from what is coercive); and (2) the providence of God can eventually be counted on even to overcome the exception (which was just expressed parenthetically).

We thank *The Evangelical Quarterly* for their kind news item recognizing our existence. The editor is right; we are not publishing a message which is noncontroversial. Some publications specialize on affirming the "positive" aspects of Christianity, that is, they merely reiterate what Christianity is, and do not criticize what may endeavor to pass as Christianity but is not Christianity. We shall devote a major part of our space to what we think Christianity is not. Of course, we shall not in such a program be attacking the teaching of infidels or non-Christians, but what is alleged by Christians to be Christianity.

A Great Banker's Thought

The introductory paragraph in the Last Will and Testament of J. Pierpont Morgan, the famous American financier (1837-1913) is quite unusual. Of all who read this, probably not one has such a paragraph in his Last Will. We quote from Frederick Lewis Allen's *The Great Pierpont Morgan,* (Harper & Brothers, New York, copyright by author, 1948):

> I commit my soul into the hands of my Saviour, in full confidence that having redeemed it and washed it in His most precious blood He will present it faultless before my Heavenly Father; and I entreat my children to maintain and defend, at all hazard and at any cost of

> personal sacrifice, the blessed doctrine of the complete atonement for sin through the blood of Jesus Christ, once offered, and through that alone.

In the same book there is a report on Morgan's attitude toward the Scriptures at the close of his life (his seventy-sixth year). It involved wholly accepting Scripture or wholly rejecting it, a rather consistent attitude characteristic of a powerful and acute mind. We quote from page 269:

> Or, better still, you might hold in your mind's eye a glimpse of Morgan at home, in the West Room of the Library, going over the morning's mail at the desk and sorting it into two piles, the letters that must be attended to, and those that can wait. Belle da Costa Greene, the devoted young librarian, remonstrates with him at the size of the pile of letters that can wait. He answers that he has found that if you leave letters alone long enough, they "die out." After a while he asks Miss Greene to read aloud to him from the Bible as he sits in the red plush chair in the corner, and specifically requests the story of Jonah and the whale. She asks him if he really believes it. He answers stoutly that he does; that if the time ever came when he could not believe every word in the Bible, he could believe none of it.

A Lament

The earliest issues of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM began with religion and ethics. In the August issue we dealt partly with religion and ethics and partly with a new question, one in the field of political science, namely, the relation of government to men. The remainder of this issue will be almost entirely in the field of political science — on the same question as was opened up in the August issue, towit, what is the relation of government to men.

It will become evident that we hold views which have been haughtily and, we think, unjustly attacked in the past by Christian statesmen and theologians. It is not reasonable for the purpose of a spurious unity to let those unjust and uninformed attacks stand unchallenged.

It is our conviction that the basic ideas of some of our great predecessors are so wrong that it is not possible to build on the foundation which they laid. Despite their being stalwart and devoted Christians we cannot use their ideas as a defense against erroneous modern secular ideas. Our predecessors themselves were sufficiently in error so that we are constrained:

1. To disassociate ourselves from their errors.
2. To defend our own ideas against their attacks, because we are assured that their ideas are irreconcilable with our ideas.
3. To attack their ideas as they first attacked ours. Their errors would never have needed to have been mentioned had they not attacked our ideas. But everyone will be confused if we ignore charges against our views which charges are by men highly regarded among orthodox Christians.
4. To show that their errors are illogical, and plainly to be seen by all.
5. To show that their errors are contrary to Scripture, *correctly interpreted.*
6. To show that their errors are contrary to sound social science, and constitute a form of irrationalism.
7. To show that their errors are discredited by experience — and that what they teach can be neither good religion nor good science, if experience is a sound test (which we believe it is).
8. To show finally that their errors are irreconcilable with the basic American tradition. Their errors are medieval and Continental.

The unsound views regarding the relation of government to men to which we refer are fairly common among Christians except the most elementary and evangelical Christians. These latter are still in that elevated frame of mind of obeying God rather than men, and so they escape the errors of their more sophisticated religious brethren.

But in the milieu from which PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM has arisen it is simplest if we refer to the specific predecessors in our own small milieu (Reformed; specifically Christian Reformed in America, and *Gereformeerde* in the Netherlands). The two predecessors to whom we shall refer especially are Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer, a significant Dutch statesman of a generation ago, and Abraham Kuyper, a Dutch theologian and politician who about fifty years ago was for a time premier of the Netherlands.

We are admirers of these men. In many ways they were marvelously right. But that does not make them right on everything. We shall, therefore, examine their ideas objectively. If they had not attacked fundamentally sound ideas (on which the greatness of the United States is actually based) we might have left their ideas rest in peace.

It will be especially necessary to challenge the ideas of Abraham Kuyper as unscriptural, as logically indefensible, and as harmful to society.

We do not, of course, go along completely with the comment of the late Professor Kirsopp Lake, of the Yale Divinity School, that the revival of orthodox Christianity in the Netherlands in the Nineteenth century (the Secession of 1834 and the Doleantie of 1887) represented a primitive and generally ignorant and back-woodsy revival of Christian orthodoxy. But when Abraham Kuyper branched out from elementary Christianity to doctrinaire statements on political, social and economic questions, the uncomplimentary idea of Professor Lake was somewhat in order. (However, the proper rejoinder to make to Lake is that the most sophisticated and rationalistic representatives of modern Christianity have been as wrong as or more wrong *on social science* questions than was Abraham Kuyper.)

"We Must Obey God Rather Than Men" (Acts 5:29b)

(Readers of this article should be acquainted first with the article in the preceding issue (August, 1955) entitled, "The Powers That Be Are Ordained of God.")

Scripture nowhere teaches that we must obey a bad government, or cooperate with a bad government by obedience. The more plainly professing Christians declare they will not obey a bad government and act accordingly, the sooner their religion will restore its fading reputation. Instead of making a clear-cut declaration that they should not and will not obey a bad government, Christians talk about "obeying the powers that be" (Romans 13:1).

In our August issue we called attention to a gravely erroneous interpretation of Scripture by Calvinists (and Christians generally), namely, the erroneous interpretation that the instruction of the Apostle Paul "to obey the powers that be" means that men should obey *bad* governments (as well as good governments) and should actively cooperate with bad governments by the act of obedience. We showed that the command of Paul applies only to obedience to *good* governments.

The Apostle Peter in his first epistle (Chapter 2:13) also admonishes obedience to government, but in that connection he makes clear that he too is talking only of *good* government, the kind that shows "vengeance on evildoers" and gives "praise to them that do well." He does *not* talk about a government "praising evildoers" or showing "vengeance to them that do well."

The rule stated by Paul and Peter, as mentioned in the foregoing, is a limited rule. It applies only to a special circumstance and not to general circumstances, namely, the special circumstance of a *good* government.

But the Apostle Peter, in the incident related in Acts 5, stated the *universal* principle governing the relationship of governments to men, namely, the simple and comprehensive rule, we must obey God rather than men. We shall devote space in this issue to that great and universal rule.

There Are No Pipe Lines Of Power Whatever From God to Governments

Every allegation or implication that a government, whether good or bad, has a pipe line by which proper power is channelled to it directly from God is false. The people who make such allegations are especially the people who possess power presently, and who do not want to lose it. Only the nonreflective and those who are fearful accept such an allegation.

If God is accepted as being *good*, then it is illogical to assume a direct power pipe line from God to a *bad* government. Common sense should make clear to all that any claim by a *bad* government to power, simply on the ground that it is *from God* is false. Authority, that is the *proper* exercise of power, depends not on visible or invisible pipe lines from God, but on the exercise of power *according to the commands of God*. It is not the *source* that in any instance validates power, but the *manner of exercising* that power that validates it.

There Are No Special Laws In Scripture For Governments

There are in Scripture no commands to governments which

1. Differ from commands to individual men, or
2. Give governments a larger range of permissible activities than individual men have.

There is no dualism in Scripture, consisting of one set of rules for individuals and another and broader set of rules for governments. Men are forbidden to kill, steal and tell lies; governments are nowhere in Scripture authorized to kill, steal and tell lies.

Men are authorized to use coercion and force to resist evil, especially the evils of violence, adultery, fraud and theft. They have no authority as individuals to go beyond the resistance of evil; neither have governments.

The great law of neighborly love is binding on all men; the same law is (at least partly) binding on government. When men employ government to control violence, adultery, fraud and theft

they do not grant to that government rights which they themselves do not possess, but they merely transfer to a central agency for the sake of economy of effort that which they possess in their own right.

Any doctrine of the *proper power* of government cannot then go beyond the doctrine of the *authority* of an individual. The principles of morality for government are necessarily in harmony with the principles of morality for individual men. Those principles for men are: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

In the February, March, April and May issues we defined the meaning of the commandment, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. We defined the commandment as:

1. Doing no harm to the neighbor (who stands for all men);
2. Showing forbearance and forgiveness;
3. Being motivated by goodwill;
4. Extending charity; and
5. Proclaiming the gospel.

The foregoing, we declared, constituted the Biblical requirement of loving the neighbor. But the foregoing does *not* require that we *like or enjoy* the neighbor. The moment that the Biblical law of love is extended so that we *must like and enjoy* what we do not like, life is no longer worth living *because freedom is gone.* And Scripture, if we understand it, certainly does not restrict proper liberty. We intend, in fact, to show eventually that the Decalogue of the ancient Hebrew religion, which declares itself to be a revelation, is a Magna Charta for liberty as no subsequent document has ever been.

The difficulty about understanding the term *love* as used in Scripture is that the term cannot keep itself free of the connotation of *liking* rather than loving, scripturally defined. Then the idea of *liking* is extended grandiosely to liking equally; then the conclusion is brought forward that if we do not like everybody equally and are not willing to associate with everybody equally in time and space — that then we are not observing the Christian or Biblical law of love. We make no secret of our opinions: we

like well-informed people *more than* ignorant people; we like new automobiles *more than* old automobiles. And when the sanctimonious shake their head disapprovingly about our likes and dislikes, we laugh. Our answer is: we are required to love our neighbor but not necessarily to *like* him. And even if we liked everything and everybody, we are not required to like them *equally.* And the reason why it is permissible not to like, and permissible to like unequally, is very simple — the phenomenon of liking, of *free choice,* of *liberty* is derived from the *variety* in creation. The world is infinitely varied. Each man can select out of that world what *he* can enjoy *most.* If he cannot carry a tune and cannot distinguish the notes in a concert, nobody has any business making him attend concerts or making him sing; and if a great musician cannot design an automobile and does not wish to do it, that is his business and none has any authority to inflict on that musician a life he does not wish to live. All this brings us to the obvious conclusion: if as individuals we may not impose *choices* on each other beyond the restraint of evil, thereby denying and destroying freedom, *neither may any group of individuals* do that, *nor any government.*

We repeat an earlier statement, namely, that the possession of *power* by a government does not give a government *authority* to do what an individual is morally forbidden to do. We shall show later that many Christian and especially Calvinist political philosophers have violated that rule and have conceded that governments or groups may do more than an individual may do, thereby authorizing a dualism in morality between men as individuals and men as groups. Readers are reminded of Declaration Four of the Progressive Calvinism League which reads:

> (a) Promote a single rule of morality; and (b) reject a dual rule, namely, one rule for individuals and a conflicting rule for groups.

In fact, there can be no real doubt that governments and groups may not do so much as an individual may do. When several people get together on taking a vacation not one of them can do everything exactly as he only wishes. He must make concessions to his associates. He must surrender his wishes in some degree, or otherwise that will be the last joint vacation which he

takes with the group. Group freedom of action and government freedom of action is less than individual freedom of action. A government and a group may act only within the range of common interest for all the participants. The "common denominator" for a large group is more limited than for a small group and for a small group than for an individual.

Of the five items constituting neighborly love listed on page 253, we do not believe a government should be active in proclaiming the gospel (number five in the list). Nor are we certain that number four is also a government function. (We plan to expand on this in the future.)

When we declare that a government has *less proper range* of action than an individual has, it will certainly be clear that we do not agree with many Calvinists who say that a government may do more than an individual may do.

Individual and neighborly love as defined by Scripture are our basic standards, the foundation on which we build the social structure as a whole. The foundation for a government is narrower. No man should delegate nor can he delegate *all* of his obligations regarding neighborly love to any group nor to any government. We agree with the great founders of the United States of America — they set up a government of *limited* powers. Neither the federal government nor any state government was permitted to assume *all* the powers — the liberties to act — which an individual citizen possessed. The founding fathers were great and wise men.

Twisting The Foundation Of Neighborly Love And of Government

Scripture states the rule on neighborly love very simply; it says: Thou shalt love thy neighbor *as thyself*. Of course, the whole meaning of this statement depends on what is meant by *as thyself*. (See the February, March, April and May issues of Progressive Calvinism.) But sanctimonious members of the churches do not like that alleged "selfish" and "earthly" standard; they recoil from a standard "as thyself." Here are some of the propositions that they substitute for the plain teaching of Scripture:

1. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as God loves us.
2. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as we love God.
3. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as God loves the neighbor.
4. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as the neighbor *individually* thinks (demands) that we should love him.
5. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as the neighbors *collectively* say (demand) that we should love him.
6. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as the government demands that we should love him.
7. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as various sphere sovereignties declare that we should love him.

All of the foregoing seven propositions are basically different from the Biblical proposition, towit, thou shalt love thy neighbor *as thyself*. They are not only un-Biblical but also contrary to common sense; impractical; some are immoral; all are pious. But men who advocate adherence to the foregoing rules sanctimoniously resent the idea that the self-love, or more accurately the *personal choices,* of a sinful human being can be the standard for morality!* They consider the exercise of free personal choices to be sinful! Progressive Calvinism does not intend to outdo Scripture in making demands on frail mortal men. We are not fond of piosity.

In addition to the positively unscriptural revisions of the law of brotherly love which have been listed, there are also the befuddled revisions which are motivated by the same idea, namely, that the free choices of sinful, mortal man should not be the standard for relationships among men. These befuddling revisions may be cast in the form of: Thou shalt love thy neighbor *as God wishes us to love ourselves.*

To love our neighbor as "God wishes us to love ourselves" implies that we should not love ourselves as we actually do, and that therefore the actual standard is false, or in other words the great commandment should read: Thou shalt NOT love thy

*The confusion about defining *as thyself* as self-love and selfishness rather than as *the exercise of personal choices* needs separate consideration. This is a matter of maximum importance in order to remove a whole mass of confusions.

neighbor as we actually love ourselves, but as we ought to love ourselves. Scripture does *not* teach that pious but somewhat silly idea.

Progressive Calvinism cannot bring itself to go along with any unscriptural or befuddling or sanctimonious definition of neighborly love.

Whitehead On Different Foundations To Philosophies

Alfred North Whitehead, the secular philosopher so popular in some Calvinist circles, had some insights with which it is not reasonable to disagree. One insight that Whitehead had was this: what appear to be *small* differences in elementary, basic ideas cause *collossal* differences in the resulting philosophies. Change *only a little* the foundation of a philosophy, and then the superstructure necessarily becomes enormously changed. Change only a little, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, and all morality changes with it.

The foundation of society and of all relations among men is either the exact Biblical law of neighborly love, or a variation of it. That little law of neighborly love should control the character of the social, political and economic structure. But change that law of neighborly love, by substituting something else for the two words, *as thyself,* and thereby giving it a non-Biblical or a fanciful or a befuddling interpretation, and then what? Get away from what Scripture plainly teaches and you will have a wholly different (and disastrous) social, political and economic structure.

We now ask: what did various social, political and economic philosophers, Christian and non-Christian, teach about the relationship of men to government and government to men? We shall begin with a Dutch statesman, Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer, and a Dutch theologian and politician, Abraham Kuyper.

Groen On The Power Of Government

Groen (1801-1876) is practically unknown to Americans, and a few words of explanation are necessary so that what is said about Groen's ideas may be understood.

Groen was an only son in a distinguished family, and saw life from the viewpoint of an aristocrat. He applied himself to politics, historical research, and devotion to the royal Dutch House of Orange. He did not concern himself with economics but with politics. He had no real interest in economics. His mind was fixated on political problems created by the ideas underlying the French Revolution and the conduct of the leaders of the French Revolution. Aristocratic Groen hardly caught up with the economic aspects of the industrial revolution and with the "social question." He speaks to this generation really then only on the question of the relation of men to government, that is, in the field of politics.

Modern orthodox Dutch Calvinism is dominated by the ideas of Groen on the relation of men to government. If Groen was right, one of the following conclusions is unavoidable:

1. The founders of the United States were wrong in their political philosophy; or

2. Groen misunderstood the principles on which America was founded; or

3. Groen was self-contradictory in his own ideas, basically in agreement with the United States but writing as if he were in disagreement.

Our belief is that Groen seriously misunderstood America, and that his political thought suffered from a fatal internal contradiction.

Groen's famous book is his *Ongeloof en Revolutie* (Unbelief and Revolution). It is an attack on the ideas of the French Revolution. No American can read it except with astonishment at its great insights and its serious inconsistencies. It is not practical to cover all phases of Groen's thought. We merely list ideas.

1. Groen felt akin to William Pitt and Edmund Burke, the great *liberal* English statesmen. He admired and praised them. But at the same time he attacked political *liberalism*. Groen must have been wrong on one or the other count. If Pitt and Burke

were right, political liberalism was right, because that is exactly what Pitt and Burke were, political *liberals*. The position Groen took was obviously inconsistent.

2. Groen defends in Chapters III and IV of his famous book the idea that the "state" was naturally *patrimonial,* that is, was developed out of the hereditary land holdings of a dynasty. In later revisions of his book he retreated from this position. However, he did not retreat enough to alter the original text, but only to add amending footnotes. See in this regard in the latest edition of *Ongeloof en Revolutie* edited by Professor H. Smitskamp (T. Wever, Franeker, Netherlands, publisher) what that editor writes in the footnote on page 41. Of course, no American can be sympathetic to ideas which stamp with approval the hereditary title of kings and princes as if ordinary men are natural subjects. Groen held the idea that hereditary rulers had a pipe line of power from God.

3. Groen escapes a fatal error by a peculiar device. He believed that a ruler did have "power from God." But over a period of time, the wretched people, crouching beneath the ruler, wrested rights, by blood and agony, from the rulers. Those "acquired" rights became contractual and inviolable. Because those rights had been obtained and existed, the old historical order appeared far better to Groen than the Revolutionary order (that of the French Revolution). Groen saw that the Revolution had wiped away not only the hereditary monarchy *but also the acquired rights of the subjects.* He was against the Revolution because it destroyed the monarchical system, but even more so because it destroyed the *historical rights of subjects.* Both the old monarchical system and the new French Republic basically claimed *unrestrained* power over individuals. Groen did not attack *that basic error.* He accepted it, because he misinterpreted Romans 13. What he really objected to was that the Revolution *also* swept away *ancient privileges.* These he did not consider to be *original* rights but only *acquired* rights. What American could agree to that? Our idea is that no one has "patrimonial rights" over us whether a monarchy or democracy. We believe we have our own *original* rights, and do not have to wait until we *acquire* those rights. This is another way of saying that no government has proper power, or authority, over us by heredity or by ancient or recent conquest.

4. So monarchical were Groen's ideas that he declared: "Certainly, Calvinist doctrine never led to a republican system of government" (page 115). Troubled with the Calvinist record of rebellion and Calvin's own republicanism in Geneva, Groen defends his own view by saying that republicanism may have been perpetrated by Calvinists but is not really Calvinist doctrine (page 114). He even quotes Calvin (our translation and italics):

> . . . And what were Calvin's political ideas? As citizen of Geneva he preferred a republic, but he advised subjects not to insist on their rights as citizens (*sic!*). In the *Institutes,* Book IV, Chapter 20, Section 8, Calvin wrote: "But if those to whom the will of God has assigned another form of government, transfer this [authority, or rights as citizens] to themselves so as to be tempted to desire a revolution, the very thought will not only be foolish and useless, but *altogether criminal.*"

To take the risk of changing government is declared in this quotation from Calvin to be "criminal." We believe there is enough bias in Groen's liking for monarchy to make the general impression he gives of Calvin's ideas invalid. Here is the larger quotation from Calvin's *Institutes,* Book IV, Chapter 20, Section 8 (our italics):

> . . . I shall by no means deny, that either aristocracy, or a mixture of aristocracy and democracy, far excels all others; and that indeed not of itself, but because it very rarely happens that kings regulate themselves so that their will is never at variance with justice and rectitude; or, in the next place, that they are endued with such penetration and prudence, as in all cases to discover what is best. *The vice or imperfection of men therefore renders it safer and more tolerable for the government to be in the hands of many, that they may afford each other mutual assistance and admonition, and that if any one arrogate to himself more than is right, the many may act as censors and masters to restrain his ambition.* This has always been proved by experience, and the Lord confirmed it by his authority, when he established a government of this kind among the people of Israel, with a view to pre-

serve them in the most desirable condition, till he exhibited in David a type of Christ. And as I readily acknowledge that no kind of government is more happy than this, where liberty is regulated with becoming moderation, and properly established on a durable basis, so also I consider those as the most happy people, who are permitted to enjoy such a condition; and if they exert their strenuous and constant efforts for its preservation and retention, I admit that they act in perfect consistence with their duty. *And to this object the magistrates likewise ought to apply their greatest diligence, that they suffer not the liberty, of which they are constituted guardians, to be in any respect diminished, much less to be violated: if they are inactive and unconcerned about this, they are perfidious to their office, and traitors to their country.* But if those, to whom the will of God has assigned another form of government, transfer this to themselves so as to be tempted to desire a revolution, the very thought will be not only foolish and useless, but altogether criminal. If we limit not our views to one city, but look round and take a comprehensive survey of the whole world, or at least extend our observations to distant lands, we shall certainly find it to be a wise arrangement of Divine Providence that various countries are governed by different forms of civil polity; for they are admirably held together with a certain inequality, as the elements are combined in very unequal proportions. All these remarks, however, will be unnecessary to those who are satisfied with the will of the Lord. *For if it be his pleasure to appoint kings over kingdoms, and senators or other magistrates over free cities, it is our duty to be obedient to any governors whom God has established over the places in which we reside.*

Calvin certainly did not share Groen's preference for monarchy. Calvin insisted on the resolute defense of liberty. We ascribe Calvin's abhorence to revolution to *practical* grounds, that is, rebellion is not justified to change from a good monarchy to a republican system. We consider the last sentence quoted from Calvin in the foregoing to be potentially ambiguous, especially

when read in the light of what precedes it; Calvin advised "strenuous and constant efforts" to preserve liberty. (We do not subscribe to the idea that Calvin said the last word on everything nor on this specifically. He does not "cover" many points at issue. By his thought he built a great cathedral, but many alcoves were left unfinished. We believe in *progressive* Calvinism.)

5. Groen does not entirely ignore the great law that we must obey God rather than men. Groen admits that under this law rebellion is permissible, but only under one set of circumstances, namely, the rebellion may be only to establish freedom of conscience, not to correct earthly injustices (see page 116 of his *Ongeloof en Revolutie.*) He declares that the *only* reason that those of the rebels in the Eighty Years' War to free the Low Countries from Spain who were Calvinists resorted to rebellion was to preserve *freedom of conscience.* In other words Groen declares that it was the position of those of the famous Dutch rebels who were Calvinists* that "the powers that be must always be obeyed" except in those matters of conscience which pertain to worshipping God. This means that a Calvinist should obey God rather than men in matters of the First Table of the Law, but not necessarily in matters of the Second Table of the Law. You could properly, according to this view, rebel in order not to go to a particular church, but you could not properly rebel to resist injustice to yourself or your fellow men. According to this you may not rebel when you wish to resist the rapacity of a prince in the form of "usurping the property and women of his subjects." *That* would be unscriptural rebellion! Groen's idea on the range of proper rebellion we consider narrow and un-Biblical and impractical. PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM believes in *always* obeying God rather than men. But Groen takes his narrow position, we believe, only because he considers those who possess power in their capacity as rulers to be practically sacrosanct.

6. Groen was unwilling to consider a government to be a creation by men. To him a government was a creation by God. He considered that a government would be unstable if dependent on the mass of men. He was willing to recognize as valid *existing* governments (monarchies), whether founded by violence, purchase,

*By no means all were Calvinists.

marriage or fraud and when continuing only by heredity. He looked upon such situations with favor, because in the environment he knew, the subjects of those rulers had gradually acquired some "rights." Those rights he considered great blessings. He was against revolution because with the obliteration of an old regime, hard-earned existing *privileges* of subjects also would be obliterated. There would be a new tyranny against which elementary rights would only gradually be restored at the cost of great danger and maybe of life.

Groen believed in a pipe line of power from God to a government. And how did he "correct" for that basic error? He resorted not to Scripture nor to logic but to history. In the *historical process* subjects had *acquired* rights. Those rights were contractual, and valid and sacred. Because those rights had been developed, liberty had been developed. But liberty was not something *original* with men; it was *derived,* acquired by historical process — by the very rebellions to which Groen objected!

Groen in general permitted the commandment, obey the powers that be, to overrule the commandment, we must obey God rather than men. PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM reverses the priority. We believe that the commandment, we must obey God rather than men, should overrule the commandment, obey the powers that be, because this last rule pertains only to *good* governments. (See August, 1955, issue.)

Groen founded his ideas on government on the basis of parental authority, the Fifth Commandment, thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother, that is, on authority as arbitrarily given by nature or by circumstance. We found authority on a *logical* basis, namely, on very good basic laws which soundly control the *policies* of governments, namely, the *whole* Second Table of the Law — especially the laws against violence, adultery, theft and fraud (Commandments Six to Nine), that is, we found governments on the specific laws defining neighborly love.

Governments which violate the law of neighborly love (thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, as defined by the Second Table of the Law) need to be resisted legally and constitutionally if

such opportunities exist, and if not, they must be resisted by force. We must obey God rather than men — ALWAYS.

Groen meant well. He ended up not far from wrong. He reminds us of a traveler who wishes to go from Paris to Amsterdam. The route is straight and simple. But the traveler first goes to New York and then back to Rotterdam. He never quite reaches Amsterdam. Nevertheless, he has arrived in Holland — after much waste motion, going around the two long sides of a triangle, when one short side was available. Groen does the same. He first creates a great problem for himself by allowing for *arbitrary* power to government. That is the trip to New York. Then he retreats to a corrected and responsible power by a corrective historical process, namely, rights acquired by the very rebellion to which he objects. By this idea he travels back from New York to Rotterdam. Note that his corrective process is not an appeal to Scripture but to history. Groen's first error was a misunderstanding of Scripture; his correction consists in a neglect of Scripture.

We lay Groen's great book *Ongeloof en Revolutie* aside. No one can read it without awareness that Groen was a statesman and a prophet. The man had a perspicuous insight into current affairs, and a clairvoyant view on the ultimate harvest of the ideas of the French Revolution. He probably never had the slightest apprehension that the Anti-Revolutionary Party which he founded would some day (in 1955) practically be operating on the basic principle of the French Revolution, namely, that the state is a power which may regulate the lives of men *beyond* the rules of the law of brotherly love outlined in the Decalogue. (The evidence on this must wait.) In a sense Groen himself was at fault. Here is a summary of his basic errors:

1. He confused the unsound Rationalistic Individualism of the French Revolution with the sound Anti-Rationalistic Individualism of England and the United States. (See June, 1955, issue of Progressive Calvinism.)

2. He had such a preference for monarchy that he was prejudiced against a republican system.

3. His preference for monarchy was related to his application of the principle stated in Romans 13 to *all* governments rather than to good governments only.

4. He corrected the error in number three by being genuinely devoted to hard-won liberties and privileges, which wretched subjects obtained not on the basis of Scripture but on the basis of what was previously described as rebellion against proper authority and a violation of Scripture. But once obtained by force, by literally wresting it from the "powers that be," then it was valid!

5. He misunderstood the principles underlying the republic of the United States. He identified those principles with the principles of the French Revolution.

Abraham Kuyper And His Sphere Sovereignty

Groen at least was a historian. He had the great benefit of sticking to history and the historical process. He was at least talking about the reality of "privileges" and "rights" fought for and obtained by oppressed subjects. Kuyper was a theoretician; he appealed neither to history nor to Scripture nor, we believe, to logic. In a manner parallel to Groen, Kuyper came to a partially corrected conclusion, but if Groen arrived in Rotterdam from Paris only by the round about way of New York, Kuyper outdoes Groen by attempting the trip from Paris to Amsterdam by going first to San Francisco and then returning to London. Amsterdam was his destination; unlike Groen, he did not quite reach Holland but only London.

Kuyper in matters of the theory of government followed what appears to have been his regular pattern — twin errors which approximately offset each other. Kuyper's twin errors in this instance were:

1. Governments have arbitrary powers and must be obeyed, because the powers that be are of God. (This is Groen's old error over again); and

2. The restoration of the liberty that was destroyed by number one is accomplishable by *sphere sovereignty.*

We shall now devote some attention to *sphere sovereignty.*

Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), well-known to all Netherlanders but to few others, was originally a theologian in the Dutch state church (*Hervormde*). Returning to orthodox religious ideas,

he led an exodus out of the state church in 1886. (There had been an earlier exodus, known as the Secession, in 1834. Eventually the two movements merged except for some splintering.) Kuyper then became a publicist, a founder of the Free University of Amsterdam, and a politician. He was Groen's successor as head of the Anti-Revolutionary Party. Groen was never able to get the Anti-Revolutionary Party (in airplane lingo) "off the ground." Kuyper was not only able to do that, but by coalition with the Catholic party, was for a considerable time premier of the Netherlands. Kuyper was, then, in his day, a man of importance in his small country.

On October 20, 1880, the Free University of Amsterdam opened its doors. The official celebration was highlighted by the inaugural address of the first Rector, Dr. Abraham Kuyper. The title of the address was: "*Souvereiniteit in Eigen Kring.*" The title is customarily translated as *sphere sovereignty,* which will mean nothing to an American unless it is explained. (The idea of *sphere sovereignty* is unknown to the English-speaking world. It is our opinion that that entails no loss. Americans of Dutch descent will do wisely to desist spreading the idea of *sphere sovereignty.*)

The *spheres* to which reference is made are the family, the church, the school system, the economic order, etc. Various smaller *spheres* would be the labor union movement; or employer groupings, as the United States Chamber of Commerce; the baseball leagues; or the Society for the Advancement of Colored People. Society, in Kuyper's thinking, consists of: (1) the government; (2) individuals; and (3) collective groupings (spheres) as illustrated in the foregoing. (We omit at this time a critical analysis of the *definition* of a sphere.)

The *spheres,* Kuyper affirmed, had *sovereignty.* In a sense the family was sovereign, the church was sovereign, the educational system was sovereign, etc. These *sovereignties* were, by definition, in whatever the crucial aspect was, independent of interference by that greatest sovereignty of all, the state. The state, according to *sphere sovereignty* had no business interfering in religious affairs; nor might the state act in a manner to encroach on the independent, sovereign domain of the family. Nor might the state inter-

fere in the educational process in a manner to supersede the parents' own proper authority in the education of their children.

Sphere sovereignty was a concept designed to place a boundary to the dangerous, expansionist sovereignty of the state. To prevent the state being *all*-sovereign, smaller, autonomous sovereignties were declared to exist. And as sovereignty for the state comes direct from God by a power pipe line, so sovereignty for each of the spheres comes direct from God by its own pipe line. When in politics we talk of establishing a *balance of power* so that no political unit becomes too strong, we do the same thing practically that Kuyper was alleging theoretically. Americans, in a sense, established *sphere sovereignty* between the executive, the legislative, and the judicial branches of government, for the same purpose as Kuyper imagined his *sphere sovereignties.*

Why did Kuyper need the idea of *sphere sovereignties?* He *did* need it. He caused his own need. Kuyper did exactly what Groen did. Kuyper first set up an irresponsible government in the form of a power pipe line from God, completely detached from the *whole* Second Table of the Law, and resting *only on power,* as allegedly authorized in the Fifth Commandment of the Decalogue only. (See August, 1955, issue of Progressive Calvinism.) Having created too big a government — too sovereign and too irresponsible a government — he was compelled to develop some counterweights.

It is interesting that Kuyper was not satisfied with the counterweights Groen used, viz., the historically *acquired* rights of subjects. Maybe Kuyper thought that too prosaic, too individualistic, and maybe he realized that there was an internal inconsistency that Groen had overlooked — rights *wrested* from government and *thereafter* valid, but not valid originally according to the theory.

And so a *theoretical* justification for some kind of liberty was needed. Kuyper's solution was *sphere sovereignties.*

The idea of sphere sovereignty is *unnecessary.* If the original idea about government had been sound it would not have been necessary to develop these *sphere* sovereignties. In our earlier metaphor telling how Kuyper wanted to get from Paris to Amsterdam, we said he first went to San Francisco (which symbolically

indicated his erroneous ideas on the sovereignty of government); and that then he backtracked to London (which was his development of his imaginary ideas on sphere sovereignty). He never arrived at true liberty which in our metaphor was designated by Amsterdam.

Not only is the idea of sphere sovereignty *unnecessary,* it is also *unscriptural.* Nineteen hundred years after Christ and 3,400 years after Moses the idea of *sphere sovereignty* is discovered and is presented as an idea worthy of a rectoral address at the dedication of a new Calvinist university. But where in Scripture *is* the doctrine taught? Any declaration that Scripture teaches sphere sovereignty is fantasy. That is not the skeptical idea of an American. Van Riessen in his recent book, *De Maatschaapij der Toekomst* (The Society of the Future) (T. Wever, Franeker, Netherlands, publisher) writes (page 87), "Scripture of course presents no theory of sphere sovereignty. It would be foolish to expect it."

According to Kuyper, the sovereignty of the state and the sovereignty of the spheres are directly from God, as per Romans 13. In both cases, the idea is eliminated that the sovereignty of the state or the sovereignty of a group is derived from ordinary men wishing to obey the Decalogue; in both cases the *individual* is outside of consideration. The individual is insignificant. Kuyper sets up his system without there being much importance to obtaining the "just consent of the governed" — about which the founding fathers of America talked in the Declaration of Independence. To Kuyper, sovereignty is *from God* directly by a pipe line. All pipe lines of power are, for Kuyper, from God to the gigantic *group,* the state, or to smaller *groups,* any sphere. Van Riessen, summarizing his own favorable idea of the doctrine on sphere sovereignty in the book just mentioned wrote on pages 85 and 86 (our translation):

> The authority of a sphere is not derived from another sphere, for example the authority of the state from the authority of the church. It exists according to its own nature and in accordance with a commission from Him, who is unrestricted sovereign, Christ, to whom God gave all power in heaven and on earth. (Matthew 28:18; Colossians 2:10; Ephesians 1:21; I Corinthians 15:17,28.)

> We come then, with Kuyper, to the conclusion, that nowhere on earth is there supreme authority, nor an absolute, nor an irresponsible authority. Christ divides authority among the various functionaries in the several spheres. They owe direct responsibility to Him. Their authority pertains to their respective spheres and goes no further.

This is the standard idea of a pipe line of power from God, and the pipe lines go to groups and to their officials only. The *individual* is the forgotten man in this scheme of things. An American cannot easily grasp an idea as this idea of *sphere sovereignty.*

This pipe line of power system fascinates us. Consider the throne of God. Pipe lines, big and small, run from that throne to all sphere sovereignties, to the Russian government and to the American baseball leagues, for example. There are millions of pipe lines because there are millions of spheres. And they change frequently, one sphere merging into another, or disappearing; or a new sphere developing, as for example the television industry. And so pipe lines must be changing too.

The pipe lines for sanitation, water and heating in a building as the Pentagon in Washington are exceedingly complex; similarly, in a great building as the Merchandise Mart in Chicago. Special plumbing architects are employed, we are told, on such projects. We understand the need.

But all such plumbing architecture is amateurish compared to this power pipe line system of sphere sovereignty. When we contemplate the system we understand that Abraham Kuyper was the greatest pipe line architect in the history of mankind. The plumbing architect for any of the great buildings does not compare. Consider the long hours of drafting a pipe line system for a great building. And here by one flash of the imagination, a limitless, flexible, perfect pipe line system, with no power lost at any defective connection!

Groen kept the pipe line system simpler. As far as we know, he had pipe lines going only to governments. He did not seem to know about *sphere* pipe lines. Our ideas are closer to those of Groen than to those of Kuyper.

We are not in the least critical of what Kuyper was endeavoring to accomplish. He was nobly endeavoring to do what Groen had attempted; having first ripped the foundation out from under liberty, he was trying to find a sure substitute against the destruction of liberty by encroachment by the government. He did not genuinely limit or "box in" the power of the government *by making it always contingent on obeying the Decalogue.* Having granted too much power to government, he felt he had to frustrate too broad and too dangerous an exercise of that power. All this is obvious to independently thinking Netherlanders, also, although they do not free themselves entirely of the fantasy of sphere sovereignty. Van Riessen in the book previously quoted writes on page 88 (our translation):

> Occasionally you get the impression that Kuyper feared the power of the state. Sphere sovereignty as a defense mechanism against the sovereignty of the state, there you have it — a summary of the events of history.

Kuyper endangered and destroyed the safeguards against liberty when he misinterpreted Romans 13. Having created that theoretical problem, there appeared to him to be no theoretical solution at hand except the spurious concept of sphere sovereignty.

This sphere sovereignty was so important for Kuyper's system that it seems he wrote somewhere that the achievements of Christ were necessary to establish this sphere sovereignty. Imagine the incarnation and the atonement as related to the sphere sovereignty of the American baseball leagues!!???

In later issues, in a supplementary manner, we shall analyze the definition of the word *spheres,* and shall raise questions about the epistemological problems associated with Kuyper's "group" approach, that is, his collectivistic approach rather than a sound individualistic approach to basic problems in the social sciences. An erroneous epistemology generally vitiates Kuyper's approach to social problems.

What has been written in disagreement with Kuyper was necessary for an understanding of his errors. Kuyper himself wrote critically and even contemptuously of views held by his contemporaries (which happen to be views we hold today). If he

was privileged to be critical, why should not the same privilege be accorded to others.

The Quest For Liberty

What did Rousseau seek? and Groen van Prinsterer? and Abraham Kuyper? They sought and we all seek the same objective — liberty.

Rousseau sought it in the people's revolution. He destroyed effectively the erroneous argument for power piped from God via kings, the pipe line system known as the "divine right of kings." But he immediately re-established the old system in the form of a people's government with as much arbitrary power for that government as the kings had ever claimed. A *source* of power which Rousseau considered good, namely, the people, seemed to him to justify as much power for government as the *source* claimed by the old monarchies, namely, God. But once power was granted or existed, the restraints on power which give liberty were not on hand. It was basically the lack of those restraints which made Groen an opponent of the French Revolution. Groen attacked the French Revolution sincerely on the ground that it was against God and legitimate power (*Ne dieu, ne mâitre;* no God, no master); it was a mock fight. The *real* issue was not the source of power, but the manner of exercising that power.

To get the right manner of exercising power Groen said rights and privileges needed to be established which were inviolable. They had gradually been developed in the monarchies. They were not allowed for in either the theory or the practice of the French Revolution. The *real* fight that Groen fought was to re-establish the restraints on power which the Revolution swept away. His real fight was not about *ne dieu, ne mâitre,* but about liberty.

In that fight he did not declare that the Decalogue controlled; no, but historical rights and privileges. And he failed to show that the kinds of rights and privileges which were historically obtained would almost certainly be manifestations of the laws in the Decalogue. In fact, they were. Scripture and experience coincide. But Groen saw primarily experience, and did not realize that experience in the form of history was only a specific manifestation of the universal laws in the Decalogue.

Kuyper sought the same objective — liberty. He was, as Groen, partly blind to the inherent error in the idea of the divine right of kings, but ignoring Groen's solution (thereby indicating he thought it was inadequate) he developed the idea of sphere sovereignty. Like Rousseau, Kuyper says sovereignty rests in persons collectively, but Kuyper adds a supplementary idea, namely, segmented collective sovereignty (spheres). Unlike British and American thinkers, Kuyper does not consider sovereignty as coming indirectly through individuals. Kuyper gives no consideration to individuals as individuals — as a practical source of the delegation of power. Power is from God; and only and always to groups. The offsetting groups, the division of power and the balancing of power between them, constitutes the means to achieve liberty.

But Rousseau, Groen and Kuyper all abandon liberty before they defend it. They first establish a dangerous power — above the Decalogue, because it has POWER *directly* from God or from the people. If none of them had first granted too unrestricted power, they would have protected liberty effectively instead of destroying liberty as the French Revolution did, or only defending liberty as a rear guard action as Groen and Kuyper did.

Liberty is properly defended by heeding Scripture, towit: We must obey God rather than men. A government should admit it is bound by the Decalogue and citizens should insist on their government being bound by the Decalogue — and we shall have liberty.

(*To be continued next month under the title, "The Quest For Ramparts For Liberty."*)

(All articles in this issue are by F. N.)

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